THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Freight Containers of Balmer Lawrie & Co. Limited are primarily exported. However, there is scope for Railways, CONCOR, Defence, Shipping Corporation of India etc., to buy this product from Balmer Lawrie & Co. Limited, apart from its use in intermodal Road transportation in the Private Sector.

(c) and (d) Balmer Lawrie has taken up its problems and demands with concerned Ministries/Agencies. This Ministry has extended necessary support to Balmer Lawrie in tackling its problems.

New Exploration Licensing Policy

2755. SHRI S. M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether bids have been invited under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP); if so, the salient features of bid evaluation criteria fixed for the purpose; and

(b) what have been the response to the bid?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Waiting List of LPG Connections

2756. SHRI K. M. KHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of persons district-wise in all State and Union Territories waiting for LPG connections as on 15th December, 1998;

(b) whether Government propose to take some measures ensuring release of LPG connections to consumers on demand against normal terms of payment;

(c) whether Government propose to reduce the charges to get LPG connections under 'Tatkal Schemes' to clear the heavy waiting position for LPG connections;

(d) whether the steps as in (c) will save the consumers from exploitation being creating by vested people; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) The toal number of persons in all States and Union Territories waiting for LPG connections as on 1.10.98 was about 137.5 lakhs. New LPG connections are released in a phased manner throughout the country depending upon the LPG availability, waiting list, slack available with the distributors and their viability. The Government has approved release of 35 lakhs new LPG connections in the country by PSU Oil Cos. during 1998-99. Plans have been drawn to enrol additional new LPG customers in the future years in the country by augmenting LPG availability.

(c) No, Sir. The Non refundable lumpsum amount was reduced from Rs. 5000/- to Rs. 4000/- only some time black.

(d) and (e) The target for releases under Tatkal Scheme is 10% of annual enrolment target. This scheme only helps those needy persons wanting to avail LPG connection without any waiting.

Commission of RPO Dealers

2757. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to refer to Unstarred Question 4094, answered on 23rd July, 1998 and state: